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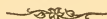
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THE MYSTIC RIDE

OF THE

SOMNIAL BRIDE.



JĒHN ARRIMA.

John E. Harriman, Jr.
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TO HYPNOS OR SOMNUS,

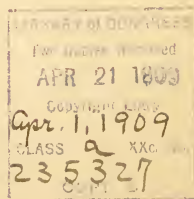
The god of sleep

and father of

Morpheus,

The god of dreams,

I dedicate the following.



INTRODUCTORY.

THE choice is made, my name is called,

My duty is, as volunteer

To run the gauntlet, rebel walled,

At risk of life, when life is dear.

This is a night for deep regret;

So ebbs and flows man's fitful tide,

I would this night have asked her set

The day that she would be my bride.

She little knows this doleful night

With her, perhaps, may be my last;

She ne'er will know my only fright,

Unless those rebel lines are passed.

But now I am as babe unborn,

Perhaps to live, perhaps to die;

I know not if my death she'll mourn,

Or if in bridal bed we'll lie.

To-night I'll gaze in her dear eyes,

Once more to hold her hand in mine,

To dream again of Paradise,

With sweet embrace and kiss divine.

Oh, could she know my love intense!
 Could we but live each other's life!
Oh, could but she in purest sense
 Until this midnight be my wife!
Until this midnight, and for years,
 If I so sure of life could be,
But who would answer to her tears
 If death should end such ecstasy?
Oh, why must I and why should she
 Of joy and pleasure be bereft?
Her heart and hand she's promised me,
 'Tis only time that now is left.
My mind is set. I'll paint a scene
 So vividly before her eyes,
That she will fancy all I mean,
 Though I will only hypnotize.
I'll hasten to her home to-night,
 I'll make her sleep in loving dream;
She must not know of later flight
 That I must make, with moon abeam,
For if I live she then will be
 Forevermore, my somnial bride;
While if I die, remember me,
 And know that I was justified.

THE MYSTIC RIDE

OF THE

SOMNIAL BRIDE.



WHAT! dearest heart, is no one near?
No one to listen? none to hear?
No one to quickly interrupt,
Or stop a thrilling tale abrupt?
Then come, my dearest one, to me.
I wish, while here alone with thee,
In many mystic words to dwell
On dreamy tale, I came to tell.
If you will listen by my side,
A tale I'll tell to you as bride,
Of trip afar, and blissful life,
Of marriage, and with you the wife.
You shall not move from out this room,
By word or action meet your doom,
You'll have no cause for fear, or shame
Of ruined life or tarnished name,
But here in tranquil privacy,
You'll think you pass in ecstasy
The treasured hours of one just wed,
While on a wedding journey sped.

No? no? you will not come? you fear
To list' to such a story queer?
My purpose you can hardly glean?
You say, you know not what I mean?
Then I will tell you, close your eyes,
For I will only hypnotize.
You let me try what I entreat,
And give yourself with kisses sweet,
For, though I will not harm you dear,
To you it truly will appear,
Beneath this light's unsteady gleam,
That sleeping, you have dreamed a dream.
Far on a wedding trip you'll roam,
Away from loving friends and home,
But free to love, as love you can,
And I shall be the favored man!
When you awake, you will but find
A dream has passed across your mind.
So come, my loved one, let me try.
Will you not trust me? no? and why?

Oh come, my dearest, once again ;
For many times, you know, you've lain
Upon this divan's downy nest,
In silent sleep and peaceful rest.
No reason have you now to fear,
For many times, you know, my dear,
Here on this taboret I've sat,
And whispered to you this and that.
So come, now, heed my pleading call !
Oh, come to me, and hear it all ;
And, as you listen, close your eyes,
While in my hand your's softly lies.

.

I knew you would, did I but tease ;
Now rest, and put yourself at ease.

You say you do not care to sleep,
Or close your eyes, but watchful keep ?
And still you wish my story told ?
You want me nearer ? hands are cold ?
Then let me warm them ; ah, my dear,
Those little fingers draw me near ;
Here while you peacefully recline,
I'll watch those drooping eyes of thine ;
But you, before I start to tell,
Should prove that you can love as well,
And give me, for my inspiration,
A kiss, without this hesitation ;
Still, as you shyly answer " No,"
I'll watch my chance, and take one,—so.

No, no, I surely shall not try

If you dare open either eye.

Perhaps you would not have me tell ?

You think you know yourself? ah, well !

I'll listen, then, instead to you,

And let you see what you can do.

Oh, " No," you say, you'd rather hear

Me tell about this marriage, dear ?

Then close your eyes, you must obey.

I'll pass my hands across, this way,

And move them so, with gentle grace,

From side to side before your face.

My sweetest one prepare to sleep ;

Now close your eyes and do not peep ;

What's that ? you say that you are tired ?

Ah, that is just what I desired.

So slumber, sweetheart, in your nest.

Now sleep, now sleep, sleep, sleep and rest.

*Sleep, sleep, my darling, sleep, my dear;
Close tight those eyelids, do not fear;
Hold ! hold them tighter, tighter, hold—
Let peaceful sleep your eyes enfold,
Your heavy eyelids tightly close
In drowsiness, now slumber, doze.
So heavy now they seem to be,
You do not even care to see;
No ! no ! you cannot if you try,—
You cannot open either eye :
You're sleeping,—sleeping—eyes—are—fast,
You're sleeping,—sleep,—asleep at last.
You're dreaming now, you're all alone.
No more you hear my whispered tone.
You're dreaming how, all lightly drest,
Within your downy bed you rest.
You're sleeping now, in Dreamland deep;
This way, till morning's light, you'll sleep.*

'Tis daylight now ! 'tis early dawn !

Your eyes you open wide and yawn,
And see the shining sunlight fall

With many shadows on the wall ;
Upon your arms and shoulders fair,

All flying free, you feel your hair,
In tangled masses toying 'round,

Where on your breast a place is found.

You throw the clinging sheets aside,

And slowly from their folds you glide.
Now sitting lightly on the bed,

With fingers linked behind your head,
And shapely arms uplifted high,

You softly draw a ling'ring sigh ;
Now, as your fingers slowly fall,

They thread your tangled mantle, all
Its curls then tossed aside, you dare
To show your heaving bosom, bare.

Now, with a dainty step you go,
And sunlit window open throw,
Without, on bright and dew-dropped lawn,
The sweet birds usher in the dawn.
Now as you stand here lightly dressed,
You think, to-night by wedlock blessed,
That you will then become a wife.
The time is near, oh, sweet is life !
You hurry now, and quickly pass
Before the clear, reflecting glass,
Where artfully with comb and brush,
You dress your hair with nervous rush ;
And next you step across the room,
Like to a morning-glory bloom,
With tint of color on the white,
A goddess-queen, uncovered quite.

With dimpled hands, you quickly take
A garment light of silken make,
That clings so closely, high and low,
That all your graceful beauties show ;
Now, one by one, each in its place,
The dainty things of silk and lace
Are hurried on in silent speed,
And fitted to their proper need ;
Then lightly through the lengthy hall,
You hasten at the breakfast call.

.

A moment's time you cannot lose,
You let it be for maids to choose
The gown you'll wear this wedding day,
For you, you have no time to stay.

All day you've hurried, rushed, and sped,
No wonder that your cheeks are red
With blushes, running nearly down
To where they meet your wedding gown.
Now, at the altar do you stand,
To give to me at last your hand
With solemn vow and trustful word,
The sweetest that was ever heard.
One holy moment now we linger,
While with the vow, upon your finger
This ring I place, that here for life
Will ever bind us, — husband, — wife.

.

Come quickly, bid them all good-bye,
For soon from out this place we fly.
Oh come, my love, now hurry, hide,
He's here on time, jump in, we ride,
With your old driver, safe and good,
Who's driven us since cradlehood.

We hear the horses' clatt'ring feet,
We see the dimly lighted street,
Where many ghostly shadows fall,
Like peeping witches watching all.
At last we leave the city lines,
And pass beneath the swaying pines,
That all in graceful motion bow,
And wave their greetings to us now.
As breezes soft move tender leaves,
Your breath comes fast, your bosom heaves.
With trembling hand I draw you near,
And kiss, caress, and call you dear.
And now, from out the shaded lane,
We drive along the open plain,
Where, far ahead, with pleasant smile,
The moon is watching us the while.
Far quicker than the horses' pace,
She seems to lead this hallowed race.

We whirl along the winding road,
The horses know their precious load,
And snort, and shake their flowing mane,
Yet truly heed the guiding rein ;
For he who holds the ribbons tight,
Remembers well his nuptial night,
When with your faithful nurse was wed,
Who lies in yonder graveyard, — dead.
Ah ! well he knows how happy we,
And when again his thoughts are free,
And saddened mem'ry disappears,
He'll smile for us beneath his tears.

.

In distance far, a single light,
A pointed weapon swift in flight,
Like Cupid's arrow seems to dart,
And penetrates your beating heart ;
It comes from out the chamber high,
Where, both together, you and I,
This midnight journey soon will end,
And greetings to the angels send.

That noise, my dear, the wheel just made
Against the steps, don't be afraid,
But careful be, and hold my hand,
While on the lower step you stand.
Come quickly, love, I'll close the door,
Alone with thee, forevermore !
Undo your robe, come, loved one, here,
And kiss me, kiss me, sweetheart, dear.

.

You're pale and white? you are not ill?
Best go up stairs, dear, if you will,
The room to right, you are aware,
You know we saw it lighted there.
No, no ! oh, no, I shall not come ;
I mean, — I mean, I'll linger some
About this drawing-room and hall,
And make believe I'm locking all
The windows and that outer door,
That well you know was locked before.

With quickened step and sigh, alas,
Now up the winding stair you pass ;
And, as you trembling, turn the knob,
Deep in your heart you feel a throb ;
The swinging door you open wide ;
A bridal room ! and you the bride !
But quite forgetting who you are,
You seal the door with chain and bar,
Then quickly slip the clinking chain,
And leave that door unlocked again.
Now, to your bedside soft you go,
And kneeling to its cover low,
Your blushing face you bury deep
In arms entwined, and softly weep ;
Then raise your eyes to Him above,
In thankfulness for all this love.

Your prayer is o'er, you lightly pass,
And stand before the looking-glass,
And slily glance, with love-teared eyes,
To see your shadowed bosom rise ;
Now, in your dreamy thoughts you start,
And place your hand upon your heart,
And think yourself the lover, who
Will hold that heaving breast to you.
No longer in the glass you stare,
But, with a sudden move, prepare,—
With mingled joy and fear, — confess ! —
As married woman ! — you undress —
Ah, child of virtue, truth and good,
Farewell forever, maidenhood.

To free yourself of all attire,
But little time it does require,
At last your trembling hands begin,
Removing first a tiny pin,
Which helps to hide your many charms,
Your graceful neck and dimpled arms ;
And next you dare expose the rest —
Your shoulders white — your whiter breast.
A place of comfort now you choose,
And sitting down remove your shoes,
The buckles bright, the silken hose,
The pretty shapely limbs expose,
Now standing on those little feet,
A ruffled gown, white, trim and neat,
Is raised above, to slowly fall —
A scenic shroud to cover all ;
And when your ankle reaches near,
You step from all your garments clear.

Once more peep in the looking-glass,
And see your hair in freedom pass,
Waving about your neck and arms
To comfort you, (while me it charms.)
Now, in your haste, you turn the light,
To leave the room in darkness quite,
While downy bed and cosy pillow,
Receive your trembling form of willow.
Then in the moonlit space you stare
With opened eyes, and all aware,
You listen long, my steps to greet,
Confounded with your heart's loud beat.

A rustle in the hall you hear,—
A quickened step, — I'm coming near ;
Now nearer sounds my even tread,
Which to your chamber door is led.
And now a gentle tap is heard,
To which you answer not a word ;
And as the door swings in its place,
You scarcely breathe ; you hide your face :
You hear these words, " my love, my dear,
Why not the light left burning here ?
Can not you answer just a word,
Or have you flown my little bird ? "

But no, I need no shining spark
To find you, sweetheart, in the dark.
I'm coming near, my step is slow,
But surely straight in line I know ;
I touch the bed, I feel about,
Look out my love ! my dear, look out !
Now, nearer still I grope around,
On silken spread a seat I've found
Where I may sit with greatest ease,—
A married man, if you but please.

My groping hand has found your cheek,
Why tremble so? cannot you speak?
I hold your hand while bending near,
And whisper, "Love me! sweetheart, dear."
You shyly turn your hidden face
And draw me down in fond embrace.
And on my lips in holiness,
A passioned kiss you fondly press.
I linger thus,—a moment stay,—
I slowly draw myself away;
And quicky as would any groom
Pass into my adjoining room,
There to discard with silent speed,
The clothes of which I have no need,
And caring not to here remain,
I hurry to your room again:

.

Then, just as Eve with Adam lies,
In Milton's "Tale of Paradise;"
With love, as Shakespeare did beget,
In "Romeo and Juliet,"
And with the joy that lover learns,
In sweetest "Songs as sung by Burns,"
Let us so live, in love, my dear,
And ever, ever, linger here.

• • • • •

You now remember very well,
 There is no need for more to tell,
How all your honeymoon was spent,
 And what you did, or where you went,
But this you know, (*or think you do,*)
 That that was back a month or two.
Now once again, as in the past,
 In your own home you are at last ;
And though the night is rather late,
 In that dim room for me you wait,
On that same divan, rest you now
 In peaceful sleep, and dreaming how ;
On wedding trip, you've been as bride,
 And think you hear me step inside.

*I'm crossing now, I'm coming near,
I sit me down beside you, dear,
Your little hand, I gently take,
And whisper, wake! my darling, wake!
Wake up, and tell me all your dream,
That true as life to you did seem.
Wake! wake my darling, wake my dear,
Ope wide those eyes, and do not fear,
For while you slept this hour so long,
You were not threatened any wrong,
In all this story told to you,
Of passing thoughts and fancy true.
So wake! my love, your eyes let beam,
Wake up, I say, and tell your dream:
Awake! now open both your eyes;
“Rise up, my love, my fair one” — rise.*

You say you're dazed and cannot see?
You want to kiss and cling to me?

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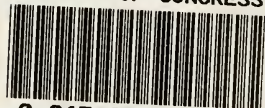
The room is dim; I'll raise the light,
And soon you will forget your fright,
For, surely, you have had a dream
Beneath this faint unsteady gleam.
You know not where you are, you say?
You wish to know how long you lay
Upon this divan, sound asleep?
Well, just a moment silent keep,
And I will call it all to mind;
Then, then perhaps, the words you'll find,
To tell to me your dream of life,
With me the husband, you the wife.

A-ha ! you now remember all,
Each burning thought to mind recall,
Then, tell your dream to me, my dear,
As every word I wish to hear ;—
But hold awhile it's getting late,
Your fancied dream will have to wait,
For on this very midnight, I
Must be prepared, perhaps, to die,
And if 'tis so, my somnial bride,
You'll know your dream was justified.
So come, who has a better right,
And kiss me sweetheart, — kiss —
Good-night.

JĒHN ARRIMA.

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